wooded valley called Nhlalalene, where we had made a halt during one of our journeyings, seeing a good-looking young woman wearing one of these curious ornaments. I was struck with the sight, and asked my companion why she was thus decorated. — "She invokes the spirits of the Ba-Ndjao," was the reply.

II. *Beginning and Diagnosis of the Disease.*

I have carefully studied the story of many cases of possession amongst the Ba-Ronga (See *Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise de Géographie*. Tome X, p. 388). Most of them began by a distinct crisis, in which the patient was unconscious, but this does not seem to have been brought about by any previous nervous trouble. A woman of the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques, *Ñwashinhwana*, fled from her home and threw herself into the Bay. The contact with the cold water restored her to her senses, after which the bones declared that she had *psikwembu*. Another, *Mholombo*, heard a voice calling her during a dream ; it was the possessing spirit, which revealed itself later on as a chief long since dead. I will now give full details of the case of *Mboza*, who was himself possessed at one time, and later on became a regular exorcist. After having worked in Kimberley for some time, he returned home in good health. Soon afterwards, however, he became lame for six months. He attributed his difficulty in walking to rheumatism (shifambo). There was some improvement in his condition, but he began to feel other symptoms ; he lost his appetite and almost entirely ceased to eat. Here is his testimony : "One day, having gone with another young man to gather juncus, in order to manufacture a mat, the psikwembu suddenly started in me" (ndji sunguleka hi psikwembu psikañwe). I came back home, trembling in all my limbs. I entered the hut, but suddenly I rose to my feet and began to attack the people of the village ; then I ran away, followed by my friends, who seized me, and at once the spirits were scattered (hangalaka). When I became conscious again, I was told I had hurt a *khehla* (a man with the wax crown (I. p. 129), and had struck other people on their backs :

158 753 756 "Ha!" they said, "he has the gods (or he is sick from the gods, a ni psikwembu)." Thus the first signs of possession seem to be a nervous crisis, but also the occurence of certain suspicious symptoms : a persistant pain in the chest, irrepressible hiccough, unusual yawning, emaciation without apparent cause, etc. These symptoms, however, are not sufficient grounds for a diagnosis, and the bones are always consulted in order to arrive at a conclusion. The amulets of the patient (called "his shade") are placed on the mat, and the bones thrown near them. We shall see, under letter D, how they must fall to confirm the diagnosis. Should they do so, a second consultation takes place in order to ascertain to what doctor the treatment must be entrusted. There are medicine-men who are specialists for this disease. They are not true *ñanga*, but are called *gobela* (dji-ma), at least amongst the Ba-Ronga, who suffer from possession more than the other clans. These gobela have formed many rival schools in which the drugs used, and the rites followed, differ slightly ; the schools of Kkongosa, Sindondondo, Ñwatshulu, who are men, and those of Ñwamutheto (in the Shifimbatello district) and of Thambulanyoka, viz., Snake-bone, both of whom are women, etc. Ñwashinhwana was treated by a disciple of Khongosa ; Mboza by Ñwatshulu.

III. *The Treatment of Possession, or Exorcism.*

755 In former times, the only remedy was waving a large palm-leaf (milala) in front of the patient. This was deemed sufficient to "scatter the spirits." Now the treatment is much more complicated. Though it varies slightly in the various schools above mentioned, it comprises four principal rites : the drum performance, the ablution in the gobo calabash, the drinking of the blood and the hondlola ceremony. In the Khongosa treatment the gobo rite comes first, and is called *baselo*. A certain root, the *phuphumane*, is prepared, and dipped into water in a big calabash cut in two so as to form a large basin. The mixture is stirred ; an abundant foam is thus produced and the patient must

Another rite, which is observed after the homdlola only, is
756 the *haza*, viz., the monthly purification of the exorcist. He
783 fills his gobo calabash with a decoction made of the roots of the
821 mphesu and ntjebe trees, drinks the whole, tickles his throat with a feather and vomits the medicine. "A tibasisa ndjen" — "he purifies his inside." This is done at every new moon. The connection between the possessed and the moon, which was first established by the fact that he had *thwaza*[1] as well as the moon, is maintained and intensified by this rite.

2) Propitiatory rites.

751 Besides these protective drugs, the exorcised wears a necklace
756 made of little pieces of a creeper called *mayambatju;* tied together with a munganazi string. See the second necklace in the
782 illustration. This is intended *to calm his gods*, and to scatter
● 168 them when they desire to come upon him with violence. This is indeed a great danger ; the exorcised is liable to nervous attacks of a dangerous nature, especially during the first few weeks following the exorcism. Perhaps his song is heard in the distance. Then suddenly he is seized with madness, and furiously assaults his neighbours with the small hatchet, or the assagay used in the dances. People run away ; or, on the contrary, they collect and begin to clap their hands, and make their infuriated companion dance and sing his own song. This may help to dispel the spirits, and calm him down. Sometimes, feeling uneasy, foreseeing a crisis, the poor man himself asks them to sing. But he may also be led, in his frenzy, to the bush, far away, unconscious, quite mad, tearing his clothes and his skin with the thorns. This often happened to Ñwashinhwana. Her husband then followed her, and, when the crisis was over, saw her fall down exhausted and brought her home ; there, having returned to her senses, she became very sad and wept bitterly. So, in order to avoid being tormented, the exorcised propitiate their spirits ; they worship them, in truth, and this gives birth to *a new religion* totally different from ancestrolatry, which has its rites and its duties.

756 As already pointed out, the exorcised has *his own altar* in his
778 hut. It is the forked branch, round which a circle of raised clay
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[1] [See p. 495 -- Analyst]

is carefully maintained, and regularly smeared. He puts his offerings there, principally tobacco. The snuff box is deposited there. Does he want snuff? He enters the hut clapping his hands, saluting his spirits, and, taking the box, throws a pinch of it at the foot of the branch, and says : "You! Ngoni, you see that I have not stolen! I first gave you your share." His wife will do the same. This is a "mhamba." — When ready to undertake a journey, he will come to the altar, sit on his ankles (a woman will kneel down) and take leave of the spirits. Holding his assagay, and his manono root, he says : "Good-bye, Ba-Ngoni! This hut is yours ; keep it well! I go to such and such a place," and asks them to bless his journeying. On his return he will inform the spirits that he has succeeded in his trip. If he is sick, and the bones have revealed that the disease has been caused by the spirits, he again comes to the altar, and says : "You! Ba-Ngoni, why are you angry with me?" These acts of worship are not only performed at the altar. Wherever he may be, before drinking beer, the exorcised will pour out a little for his spirits. He will also throw a little food for them before eating. This will be *a daily worship*, much more constant and individual than the rites of ancestrolatry, a real communion with the spirits who, after having tormented the exorcist, have become his benefactors, giving him the power of healing others and thus of making money! There is much more religiosity in the exorcised than in ordinary people. 756 778 782

3) Development of subliminal faculties.

All these nervous crises, natural or provoked, the double psychological existence which is fostered by them, the regular participation in the exorcism of others, generally greatly injure the mind of the exorcised ; they have an extraordinary look, something wild about them, as if they were not in their right senses. They may be heard sometimes groaning, or emitting a sudden cry without any reason. This nervous instability may pass away and they may return to their normal state, but it may be that if they possess those strange mental powers, which modern psychology 756 158 791

756 calls subliminal, and which are more or less dormant in every
158 individual, these faculties will suddenly develop and the exorcised
791 will become a real magician. A faculty of *second sight* may reveal itself. Or he will become a *diviner*, either by ecstasy or by bone throwing (See Letter D). Or he will be a *wonder-worker*, a *prophet*, etc. Mholombo, who was an extraordinarily acute woman, had possessed all these gifts. She could discover wizards ; one night, crossing the Mabota country, she met one of the indunas of the chief accompanied by two other men, leading his own wife to the marsh, in order to eat her. They were acting in their capacity of wizards (See Letter C). Mholombo knew them at once and said to them : "No use eating her. Her meat is bitter sour." Terrified, the wizards fled, and confessed their guilt next morning! I have related in the *Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise de Géographie*, of 1910, how she received divinatory bones from her possessing spirit, prophesied the arrival of missionaries, showed up the man who had stolen £ 8 to the Mpfumo chief, was given the power to cross the Nkomati river by walking on the water, etc. By this same power Shidzabalane was able to leave his body, and to go and dwell in his own shadow (p. 362). Reference will again be made to the profession of magician when dealing with witchcraft.

4) The society of the exorcised.

756 If the power of an exorcised person becomes very great, if he succeeds in his cures, all his *mathwaza* join him, and he becomes the founder of a school. He starts new rites, discovers more powerful drugs, and so attracts patients to himself from all parts. We have seen that five or six schools existed northward of Lourenço Marques, in the Mabota and Nondwane countries. Mboza might have started a new one, as he had already cured two patients.

Each school of exorcists celebrates *an annual feast*, in winter, at the close of the harvest season, a feast to which all the disciples of the master are summoned. This is the rite of the *renewal of the drugs*, which we have already noticed as a medical practice in the

thus remain in the grave, and not trouble other people. Moreover a little hut is built on the grave itself, as was the case for Sokis (I. p. 141), with the same intention, to protect the exorcised against heat and fatigue. If the deceased was not only a disciple but a master, his drugs will be stored in the hut till the adjudication of the inheritance. The most skilful of his followers, the one who best knows the use of these charms, will dance on the grave, all his companions clapping their hands to encourage him, and, when the mourning is ended, he will "raise the drugs," burning them as is done at the annual feast, and will eventually succeed his master.

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6) Conclusion on Possession.

Cases of possession, such as those which occur amongst the Thongas, are met with in a great many other countries. A Swiss missionary, the Rev. H. Rusillon, working in the Paris Mission in Madagascar, has drawn attention to practices very similar to these, called the Tromba, amongst Hovas. It is impossible not to note the striking resemblance between the Thonga disease and that of the demoniacs of the New Testament. On hearing the story of the madman in Gadara, whose spirit called itself Legion, the Natives at once identify the phenomenon, and say: "These demoniacs had psikwembu."

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These psychological phenomena are certainly of a morbid character. The fact that they generally appear in an epidemic form is significant. It has been noticed that similar epidemics have broken out in populations which have been weakened by the sufferings of a long war, when the nervous resistance had been reduced by privations. May not the progress of Alcoholism, together with the disintegration of the old social order caused by the influence of European civilisation, account for the spread of the disease amongst the Ba-Ronga in the last fifty years?

Whilst not pretending to analyse these phenomena scientifically and fully, I will here add two observations:

1) In the Jewish conception, phenomena of possession were due to *evil spirits*, devilish agencies, which tormented poor humanity, and were cured by the power of the real and true God. Dualism prevailed in their religious conceptions. This idea of dualism is altogether absent from the Thonga belief. South African Bantus have not yet reached that stage of religion where the antagonistic ideas of right and wrong are

158 753 transported into the realm of divinity, thus giving rise to the true gods and the devils. Possessing spirits are not worse than ancestor-gods. They all are non-moral. They can bless and curse, and their moral character is not taken into account at all.

2) The progress of modern psychology gives an explanation of many of these phenomena. The disease of the personality which manifests itself in the presence of a double psychological consciousness is well-known ; the hypnotic suggestion which the tambourine players unconsciously exert on their victims, sufficiently explains the origin of the disease, and the kind of life led by the exorcised is well calculated to develop their mediumistic faculties. So many of the so-called miracles of possession are easily accounted for. It would however be going too far to exclude, a priori, any possibility of external spiritual influences in [797] those phenomena. There is one very striking fact which is a source of great wonder to the Natives. These patients, as soon as they put themselves under Christian influence, are healed at once and for ever. We have, amongst our converts, exorcists who had acquired great fame, and who recount, with glowing eyes, how they have been delivered from their terrible anguish by their new faith. For, whatever success they may have obtained in their career of exorcists, their condition was a disease, a painful disease, and they are extremely glad to have been delivered from it. This fact must certainly be remembered when trying to arrive at an explanation of possession.

C. WITCHCRAFT.

789 754 I have pointed out, in an article published in the Report of the S. A. A. A. S., of 1906, how little comprehension most White people have of this important but difficult subject. A confusion is almost always made between the *witches* and the *witch-doctors*. The French word *sorcier* and the English term *sorcerer*, indiscriminately used for those who cast spells and for magicians, lead to the same misconception. In order to avoid errors it is, I think, imperative first of all clearly to distinguish between *Black Magic* and *White Magic*. The adjectives black and white are not employed in this connection amongst South African Natives, but Thongas certainly do make the distinction and possess different terms for each. Black magic is called *Buloyi* ; it consists of the